

Appln No. 09/857,715

Amdt date October 4, 2004

Reply to Office action of April 2, 2004

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Previously Presented) A method for separating image sequences stored on media into individual sequences comprising:

determining sequence changes of a first type when a mean image brightness of a current image exceeds an upper threshold value or is less than a lower threshold value, wherein the threshold values are calculated from a moving mean value of the image brightnesses of preceding images;

setting separation markers of a first type for sequence changes of the first type;

determining sequence changes of a second type, based on a change in an image content between successive images; and

setting separation markers of a second type for sequence changes of the second type.

2. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the sequence changes of the first type comprise a predetermined number of successive individual images of substantially the same brightness.

3. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the sequence changes of the second type comprise a predetermined number of individual images having a substantially corresponding image content.

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4. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 3, wherein the sequence changes of the second type comprise an individual image whose content differs from the content of its preceding images by a predetermined amount.

5. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the image sequences are digitized before determining the sequence changes of the first and second types.

6. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, further comprising examining the image sequences for separation markers of the first type and, in the absence of separation markers of the first type, examining for separation markers of the second type.

7. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 6, further comprising producing a provisional list of all possible separation markers, and effecting a post-processing in order to determine the individual sequences.

8. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 7, wherein separation markers of the first type take priority over separation markers of the second type.

9. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 7, wherein separation markers of the second type which are situated within a predetermined number of individual images from separation markers of the first type are discarded.

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10. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 7, wherein a separation marker of the second type is discarded if its preceding image sequence does not contain a predetermined number of individual images.

11. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein separation markers that are based on image sequences that have less than a predetermined number of individual images are discarded.

12. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein separation markers of the first type comprise a predetermined number of successive black images or a predetermined number of successive white images.

13. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1 wherein images identified as separation markers are not stored, and wherein a first image immediately after each separation marker is the first image of an image sequence.

14. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, further comprising calculating a moving mean value of the image brightnesses over a predetermined number of individual images and calculating the upper and lower threshold values from the moving mean value and a parameter for the response sensitivity of the separation markers of the first type, such that a white separation marker is set if a mean image brightness of a current image exceeds the upper threshold value, and a

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black separation marker is set if the mean image brightness of a current image is less than the lower threshold value.

15. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 14, wherein mean image brightness values of images identified as separation markers do not enter into the moving mean value calculation.

16. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, further comprising setting separation markers of the second type between a current and a preceding image by calculating a RMS deviation of a pixel brightness; determining a moving mean value of the RMS deviations over a predetermined number of preceding image changes; determining a second type threshold value from a parameter specifying the response sensitivity for separation markers of the second type; and setting a separation marker if the RMS root mean square deviation of the change in image from the current and proceeding images exceeds the second type threshold value.

17. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 16, wherein RMS root mean square deviations of separation markers of the second type are used in calculating the moving mean value, but the RMS deviation of separation markers of the first type are not used in calculating the moving mean value.

18. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 7, further comprising discarding all separation marker sequences with separation markers of the first type that contain less than

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the number of individual images which is necessary in order to set a separation marker of the first type, and discarding all separation markers of the second type which have fewer individual images between itself and a next separation marker of the first type than the minimum number of images of a sequence which is necessary in order to be terminated by separation markers of the second type.

19. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein a sequence starts with a starting image chosen from the group consisting of a first image of a file, a first image after a separation marker of the first type, and a separation marker of the second type; and ends with an ending image chosen from the group consisting of a last image of the file, a last image before a separation marker of the first type, if it acquires at least the number of individual images which is necessary in order to set a separation marker of the first type, and the last image before a separation marker of the second type, if it contains at least the minimum number of images of a sequence which is necessary in order to be terminated by separation markers of the second type.

20. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein a selected individual image of an individual sequence is displayed as an icon on a monitor, and wherein the individual sequence is started by clicking on the icon.

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21. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 20, wherein a sequence of individual sequences is started for viewing by clicking on a plurality of icons.

22. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1 for use in automatically separating digitized films into individual sequences.

23. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1 for use in automatically separating digitized cardiological films into individual sequences.